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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 001831

SIPDIS

FOR AF AND AF/S

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [Z1](#)

SUBJECT: ZIMBABWEAN DIPLOMATIC NOTE POSES MORE QUESTIONS  
THAN ANSWERS

Classified By: CHARGE ROBERT E. WHITEHEAD FOR REASONS 1.5 B/D.

1. (U) Embassy received a diplomatic note and statement at COB on August 9, before the long Hero's Day weekend. Below is the entire text.

Begin text of Diplomatic Note:

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Zimbabwe presents its compliments to the Embassy of the United States of America and has the honor to forward a statement in response to recent remarks by the US Assistant Secretary of State, Mr. Walter Kansteiner.

The Ministry would like to assure the Embassy that the Government of Zimbabwe does share the same concerns as the United States on such issues as democracy and good governance and is willing to engage the Government of the United States on such matters. The Ministry believes however that such dialogue will be facilitated by mutual understanding by both sides of the dynamics which shape political policies. It is in this vein that the attached statement has been made, for onward transmission to the relevant authorities.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Zimbabwe avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Embassy of the United States of America, the assurances of its highest consideration.

Harare

August 2002

End text of Diplomatic Note.

Begin text of Statement:

The Zimbabwe Government maintains that there is a concordance of views and value systems between the US Administration and itself. It has conducted its relations with the US on this basis. We have always believed that both our countries are looking forward to a world where mankind can be freed from the misery caused by race, xenophobia, terrorism, hunger, disease, and war.

The Government of Zimbabwe is aware that one of the historical realities of our time, is that the United States is the leading democracy in the world today. We have maintained the hope that the US Administration is prepared to lead the world in this regard and that, sooner rather than later, the US Administration will assume this role, not only for the benefit of larger developed nations, but for the developing nations as well.

The Zimbabwe Government has recently become aware that the US Administration has attitudes which make it difficult for it to relate positively and constructively with Zimbabwe. These attitudes may have a basis somewhere, but we cannot believe that they arise from genuine concerns about Zimbabwe's conduct of its domestic affairs, nor from direct differences between the US and Zimbabwe in the manner both regard their respective obligations as sovereign governments. The Zimbabwe leadership fought for and introduced national freedom and participatory democracy to the country and the government has maintained the second longest unbroken record as a multiparty democracy in Africa. It continues to uphold the principles of democracy, rule of law and human rights.

The recent remarks by the US Assistant Secretary of State, Mr. Walter Kansteiner, 31 July 2002, claiming that democracy and human rights were no longer applicable to Zimbabwe, appear to reflect what the US Administration would wish to say about Zimbabwe, but they do not match the reality of governance in Zimbabwe. It is of grave concern that such remarks should be uttered. They distort the essence of Zimbabwe's genuine effort to promote democracy, the rule of law, equity, and prosperity among its people whom colonial racism had impoverished for over a century.

Mr. Roger Winter, the USAID Assistant Administrator visited Zimbabwe recently. He visited Mashonaland Central, (Tsenga Village, Mount Darwin) to see for himself the extent of

people's participation and involvement in the distribution of food relief. Mr. Winter would admit that this visit brought him face to face with our governance at work and especially the high level of consultation and stakeholder involvement in their own local affairs. It is assumed that Mr. Winter has not yet had the opportunity to share his experiences with Mr. Kansteiner and we hope that he will have the opportunity to do so soon.

Zimbabwe wishes that the concordance of values it has always shared with the United States should remain the firm basis upon which to build our relations in trade, investment, tourism and technical cooperation. The Zimbabwe Government assures the Government of the United States of its highest consideration and continued friendship.

End text of Statement.

12. (C) Comment: Frankly, we were a bit perplexed about the timing and substance of this diplomatic note, the cordiality of which was not echoed in Mugabe's August 12 and 13 speeches (septel). Although we have been frozen out by the MFA since the March election, the Americas desk officer delivered this note in person, telling us he had been instructed to do so by the permanent secretary, who is no America-phile. Although some of the note's claims are laughable -- the GOZ "continues to uphold the principles of democracy, rule of law, and human rights" -- the letter appears to be an overture, a feeler to see if we are interested in engaging with the GOZ on issues of mutual concern. Given recent threats by President Mugabe and other senior GOZ officials to impose retaliatory sanctions on EU and U.S. officials, the note could be a last-ditch effort to ward off such action, which the professionals at MFA know would only further isolate Zimbabwe. We believe a brief letter of acknowledgment is appropriate, stating that the USG has always believed in the importance of bilateral dialogue, that we are happy to share with them once again our views on the way forward. We want to avoid giving the GOZ the impression, however, that mere dialogue, in the absence of significant policy changes, will lead to an improved bilateral relationship with us or other key international players. End comment.

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